

We Claim:

1. A method for mounting a printing master in the form of a foil or film on a printing form cylinder, which comprises:

making ready a new print job with a given printing-image length by releasing an unwinding spool;

activating a drive for the unwinding spool for moving the printing master a prescribed length in circumferential direction of the printing form cylinder on a circumferential surface of the printing form cylinder by drawing the printing master to a rewinding spool;

braking the unwinding spool to build up tension in the printing master;

locating an image start of a preceding print job on the circumferential surface of the printing form cylinder facing the rewinding spool;

providing a control device for activating the drive for the unwinding spool;

producing data in the control device regarding the length to be spooled forward, before activating the drive for the unwinding spool;

fixing the rewinding spool and the unwinding spool, after advancing the printing master the prescribed length, for insuring tension in the printing master; and

determining a value of the length of the printing master to be spooled forward, being at most equal to a length of a printing image of the immediately preceding print job plus a printing image spacing.

2. The method according to claim 1, which further comprises determining the printing image spacing by applying at least one of the following variables:

a correction value for mechanical slip and for tolerances in the drive of the rewinding spool;

a residual material length of the printing master;

a safety spacing; and

a correction value for the spacing of teeth of a toothed directional locking mechanism connected to the unwinding spool for fixing the unwinding spool after the printing master has been advanced.

3. The method according to claim 2, which further comprises basing the safety spacing on empirically determined statistical values.

4. The method according to claim 2, which further comprises determining remaining possible print jobs from the residual material length.

5. The method according to claim 1, which further comprises calculating in a preceding print job, wherein partial images are present in the form of digital data, the length of the printing master to be spooled forward, by determining, for a partial image, the spacing of a screening pixel lying farthest away from the image start in the circumferential direction of the printing form cylinder.

6. The method according to claim 5, which further comprises determining the spacing during imaging of the printing master for the preceding print job by counting and buffer-storing, column by column, cycles required in the circumferential direction when producing screening pixels on the printing master, and determining a maximum value of the cycle numbers, buffer-stored column by column, across all of the columns of color separation, and applying that maximum value when calculating the length to be spooled forward.

7. The method according to claim 5, which further comprises determining the spacing by simulating imaging of the printing master for the preceding print job.